



Ballona Wetlands Working Group

July 25, 2006

5:30 - 7:30 pm

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Participant Introductions

2. Review of the Agenda

3. Presentation of Opportunities & Constraints for Restoration Plan

Jeff Haltiner reviewed the restoration planning process, the purpose of the opportunities and constraints and explained the draft opportunities and constraints (see table).

4. Discussion of Opportunities and Constraints

John Jostes facilitated a discussion of the draft opportunities and constraints. Participants were asked to identify any points that needed clarification and to identify any additional opportunities or constraints that had been missed in the draft document.

Written comments should be submitted to Mary (msmall@scc.ca.gov) within two weeks. Below is a summary of the comments from the Working Group:

Habitat & Biodiversity

- Vector control should be added as a constraint to habitat restoration goal, need to include consideration in the design process, because aggressive vector control will have significant ecosystem impacts.
- Legal constraints to changing the function of the Freshwater Marsh function.
- Need to update surveys of fish, invertebrates, reptiles, birds and lichen. The last comprehensive study was the Schriber report. No studies have been done on area C or Ballona Creek channel. Concern that past studies were biased. Ask SAC for recommendations of what studies are needed
- Include adjacent lands as opportunity: County Marina, El Segundo Dunes, etc.
- Parking lot areas on Area A are opportunity for restoration because there is no habitat that will be displaced there "blank slate"
- BEEP created a website that merged all the botanical surveys of the site: www.saveallofballona.org
- Protect the brackish wetland area on B

Physical Processes

- There are parts of Area C that are low enough to restore without topographic alteration
- Opportunity to replicate the channels in area B at Area A or C to create muted tidal wetland
- Constraint: responsiveness to tsunamis
- Opportunity to use ground water as a source of freshwater for the restoration
- Constraint: source of clean freshwater
- Opportunity for ocean access at SW end of Del Rey lagoon.
- Consider effect of tides on freshwater areas (as tides rise freshwater areas in the channel rise)

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LEAVE NO TRACE

Sustainability

- Sea level rise there is an opportunity to use tide gates to accommodate sea level rise and still have range of habitat more constrained in channel
- Adaptive management, low maintenance restoration are good concepts to include, would like to see this project learn from other So CA wetland restoration projects
- Opportunity to treat urban runoff upstream of the project area to address water quality constraints.
- Opportunity for stormwater treatment on Area C.
- Opportunity to connect the site directly to the ocean which would solve issue of poor water quality in Ballona Creek – link through the City's parcel at Del Rey Lagoon
- Proposed TMDLs for metals suggest limiting sediment size coming down the channel may further constrain marshplain development and site evolution. Opportunity to work with the Army Corps feasibility study to identify appropriate sediment loads. Get info from the Corps about contaminants in the sediments of Ballona Creek from their dredging work. May not be able to count on TMDLs cleaning up the water in Ballona due to the extreme cost (\$10-15 billion).

Cultural Resources

- Opportunity to preserve historical facilities on site, for example the art deco era abutments of the Pacific Electric railway bridge near Lincoln Blvd.

Public Access & Recreation

- Public access, there is an opportunity to use the Pacific Electric RR platforms to build a bridge for pedestrian access from A to C
- Needs to be a bike/pedestrian bridge across the Ballona Creek channel and along the west side of Jefferson; opportunity to get bike path built as part of Caltrans expansion
- Cabora Rd is an opportunity for public access with great view of the site, public road, already built and paved, that extends from Sepulveda to Pershing except where fenced by Gas Co.
- BMX use is incompatible with ecological reserve designation
- Aesthetic values are subjective but important, opportunity to reduce litter, which is a major problem and sends the incorrect message that this place is not valued.

Safety

- DTSC should be involved in discussion

5. Project Updates

- An all day design charrette will be held in the fall as a joint meeting of the Working Group and the SAC, date to be announced.
- Announced that Mountains and Recreation Conservation Association will begin providing ranger services at the site. Once contracts are finalized there will be a kick-off meeting and contact information will be sent out.
- Introduced Sean Berquist who will be working on the Ballona project for the Santa Monica Bay Commission. Announced change in staffing at the Coastal Conservancy, Marc Beyeler has accepted a job with Trust for Public Land, new Conservancy staff person will be hired to work on Ballona.

6. Public Comment

- Request for establishment of a monthly meeting to coordinate current and on-going stewardship activities.
- Comment on the need for more detailed public interaction during the discussion of Opps and Constraints

7. Adjourn